



High achievers of O- and A-level examinations receiving certificates and medals from Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal during The Daily Star 17th O- & A-Level Awards Presentation Ceremony yesterday. **Bottom left**, Shajedul Haque Thakur of Willes Little Flower School & College, Mayisha Mahdiya Sultana of Techno-Cider Int'l School and Taaseen Rahman of International Turkish Hope School -- three of the nine outstanding performers, who got highest A's in the exams -- pose with their trophies. Students of an English school staging a cultural performance depicting the rural heritage of Bangladesh during the ceremony, **bottom right**.

## ASIA CUP FINAL

# Ticket troubles irk desperate fans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chaotic scenes dominated the area around the United Commercial Bank Limited's (UCBL) Mirpur 10 branch yesterday as desperate ticket buyers, for the Asia Cup final, and the police were involved in a number of clashes throughout the day.

So intense was the scenario that it led to eight individuals being detained and a number of injuries.

The police was also forced to block the road along that path and stop traffic activity for half-an-hour in the afternoon.

Most of the ticket buyers, who had queued up in front of the bank since Friday night, complained that the bank had sold very few tickets.

"At first we heard rumours that tickets won't be sold. And that's when a number of those standing in the line got agitated. And then once they did start selling tickets, they stopped after a very short time," said Ashfaque Chowdhury, a private university stu-

dent who was present at the area since 7 am.

According to Sourab Ghosh, another student studying in a private university, there were many who had lined-up in front of the branch and had spent the entire night there.

"Many of them didn't even move out of the line fearing that they would be pushed back," he said.

According to eyewitnesses, several hundred people began attacking the booths at noon once when the bank stopped selling tickets. The police, in a bid to dismiss the commotion, charged at the crowd with batons. According to sources the sale of tickets resumed in the evening at around 5 pm but was stopped after ten minutes.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Mirpur Division, Masud Ahmed said that four police officials were injured yesterday.

According to an official from the Dhaka medical college hospital, a passerby from the area, who had been hit by a brick that was being hurled at

the bank, had gone to the hospital for treatment.

While standing at the line, many ticket buyers were criticizing the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium's (SBNS) capacity and the ticket distribution mechanism.

Later in the day Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza sympathized with the team's fans.

"I saw in the morning that there were many people standing in line in front of the booth. It's a lot of trouble for them and it's unfortunate. I just hope our team does something good.

"Our biggest strength has always been our fan-base. We get inspired because they come in huge numbers. They have sacrificed a lot for us and I think this is a big opportunity for us to do something good," said Mashrafe during the pre-match press conference at the SBNS.

In addition to the fans, few national cricketers also complained that they didn't get the number of tickets that was originally allocated for them.

## Preparing for the prize fight

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preview for the final; of course mostly in favour of the beloved team that have given them enough occasions to celebrate in the international arena over the past two years.

Even the rational minds have been swayed by emotions, despite knowing that the home side are going to face a team full of T20 specialists, as they believe that Mashrafe Bin Mortaza wields a magic wand in his hands; one doesn't have to go too far back to find examples of his wizardry; his two boundaries that shot out Pakistan and empowered the Tigers to the final, for example.

The charismatic Bangladesh leader not only overcame many adversities in his career to become a rare example in sporting history, but created history by leading his team to achieve one glory after another since the last ICC World Cup in Australia-New Zealand. So why can't the first major trophy be won by the country under his leadership?

This is the sentiment and belief all around. Ask even a rickshaw-puller or a CNG driver and they are also ready to sacrifice their earnings to watch the mouth-watering final. Traffic-free roads on the usually busy Sunday evening may not be unlikely, as it is expected that everyone will be glued to their television sets from 7.30pm, apart from those lucky ones who have gotten tickets to watch the match from the stands.

Mashrafe did not hesitate to declare during a lengthy pre-match press conference yesterday that India were overwhelming favourites and that the Tigers' success in the current Asia Cup does not mean they have become a formidable side in the shortest format overnight, but he also made a strong statement, saying they have taken a strong stride. The people and media love a trip down memory lane whenever the two teams lock horns, so even Bangladesh's 2007 World Cup success against India in the West Indies was brought into the discussion. And it was obvious that that heart-breaking 2012 Asia Cup final, the Tigers' first final in any major tournament, was revisited.

However, one can take inspiration from their captain when he assured that his side are no longer a team that lose close matches, like they did against Pakistan in the Asia Cup final four years ago at the same venue.

On paper, India are favourites and they have vast experience of playing such crunch games. They have so far put in clinical performances in the tournament, including the convincing win in the opening game against Bangladesh. The home side however also proved that they could land heavy punches on their opponents.

One thing is for sure; there will be no shortage of spectators' delight when bowlers like Taskin Ahmed go for the jugular. Overall one can have

high hopes with the Bangladesh pace attack and everybody believes that there will be no shortage of killer instinct from them in the final. A four-pronged pace-attack and change in batting order has been on the cards and it is believed that under the leadership of Mashrafe, the Tigers will leave no stone unturned to clinch their first major trophy.

There is no doubt the Tigers need to improve their batting. There are some concerns over the batting ability of the home side in T20 cricket despite their two victories against Sri Lanka and Pakistan, especially since it will understandably not match the formidable Indian batting line-up. But they proved in recent times that they are a team who are capable of overcoming every new hurdle and prove everyone wrong.

In the end, the emotion, facts and figures, all appear useless when one remembers that no one is a favourite in this format, where one over can change the whole complexion of the game.

Who ultimately reaches the summit will be determined after this evening's three-hour battle and Bangladesh captain Mashrafe, who is not a great fan of this format of the game, stated it will be fantastic for them if they can win the final, but all will not be lost if they lose the final; a spirit of pressure defiance that his colleagues will do well to follow.

## Shine, always

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"Remember the country. Do something for your country," Zafar Iqbal said in his moving speech that set the tone of the ceremony to salute the nation builders of tomorrow.

A total of 1,915 students from 85 schools across the country received the award this year. Of them, 73 secured the highest marks in different subjects in the world and 132 in the country.

Certificates and medals were conferred on eight students who got the highest five A's in the A-level.

They are Dibyatanyo Bhattacharjee of Chittagong Grammar School; Anika Faizah Jalil, Mashiyat Mayisha Ahmad and Shikhor Shams Wahed -- all from Scholastica; Maitraee Mistry of SFX Green Herald International School; Noorin Suhaila Asjad of Sunnydale; Shajedul Haque Thakur of Willes Little Flower School & College; and Mayisha Mahdiya Sultana of Techno-Cider International School.

With 11 A's in one seating, Taaseen Rahman of International Turkish Hope School received special recognition in the O-level category.

The programme began with the national anthem.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam welcomed the guests shortly before introducing six iconic personalities of Bangladesh -- weightlifter Mabiya Akter Simanta, swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila, Under-14 female footballers Krishna Rani Sarkar and Marzia Akter, Under-19 cricketer Mehedi Hasan Miraz, and Korvi Rakshand Dhruvo, founder of Jaago Foundation.

Zafar Iqbal then stepped onto the podium and began his electrifying speech that covered from ways to enhance one's intellectual abilities to the pleasure derived from helping others.

"Albert Einstein's brain was just like that of the others when he was born," he said.

But, Einstein used to think so hard and so deeply that his brain cells became more active than others'.

"If he can do that, you too can improve your brain. Don't be happy with what you have," said Zafar Iqbal, also a popular science fiction writer.

"If you do things for others, it is exciting. If you don't do that, you will be just like anyone else," said Prof Zafar Iqbal, who used to teach computer engineering at a US university, but later returned to his motherland.

In the meantime, students of BAF Shaheen English Medium School staged a dazzling performance depicting how farmers plant seeds, harvest crops and celebrate the Nabanno (harvesting) festival.

More such brilliant performances by Mastermind English Medium School, Bangladesh International Tutorial, ABC International School and Scholastica followed amid distribution of certificates and medals and speeches by distinguished guests.

Prof Omar Rahman, vice chancellor of Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB), said the students present at the ceremony were more privileged than

most others in the country.

"You will enjoy your life amid more comfort, wealth and opportunity than the vast majority of people of this country. These privileges must come with accountability and responsibility."

He also encouraged the students to pursue their dreams at all costs.

"You need to further question and refine your goals. Take a chance. Step out of the box."

Zara Jabeen Mahbub, head of communications & service quality at BRAC Bank Ltd, shared how she pursued higher education despite study gaps due to familial reasons.

"Everything in life will not be ready for you. Therefore, what is needed is making the best decision based on the realities," she told the students.

Joshua Yap, associate dean (admission, recruitment & marketing) at the faculty of science of the University of Nottingham, Malaysia campus, said students need to strive for excellence.

"Keep up the energy. Generate energy ... not only for yourself, but for your family and the society."

Saidur Rahman, country manager of Pearson Edexcel Bangladesh, hoped that the students would be able to pursue higher education in the top class universities of the world.

Ravi Chandran, country director of the IDP, a student consultancy firm, wished bright future for the students. "What could be more inspiring than the iconic figures present in front of you today?."

In his speech, Mahfuz Anam hoped that Bangladesh would lift the Asia Cup trophy this year, and said there should be efforts to make the country champion in every field.

Congratulating the outstanding achievers, he said, "Unless your country and people are respected, your personal achievement is half-done."

He also stressed the need for practising religious tolerance.

"You must teach your children to respect religions of others and differing views," Mahfuz Anam urged the parents.

The organising partners of this year's ceremony included BRAC Bank and Independent University of Bangladesh with Edexcel, IDP and University of Nottingham as associate partners. Channel i was the broadcast partner of the event.

### A GREAT INSPIRATION

Md Shajedul Hoque Thakur, one of the highest A-level achievers, said, "The award is obviously a big deal for me. It reminds me that I've studied a lot, but it is also a reminder of my responsibility to the society as a nation builder."

Shajedul took the exams in June last year and earned A's in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Accounting.

Md Mahmudul Basher, whose son Raiyan Basher obtained the world's highest marks in Mathematics and Further Mathematics in the O-level last year, recalled how The Daily Star award had inspired his son.

"He studied targeting The Daily Star award. He used to say that he must achieve it," said the proud father.

## Zia's brother to float political party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahmed Kamal, younger brother of late president and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, yesterday said he was likely to launch a new political party within a year or two.

He, however, did not say when it would be launched or what its name would be.

"I may form a political party and that's why I have come here today," he told reporters after a discussion at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital.

When asked about details, he said "I will invite you [journalists] when will do that."

Later, the former government official told The Daily Star that it might take a year or two to start the activities of his party.

However, at the discussion titled "Shaheed Zia's Ideology and Restoration of Threatened Democracy," yesterday, he said he would work with the dedicated leaders and activists of the BNP to organise the party formed by his brother.

"I am with you and I will be with you as a fellow fighter to lead the party in the right direction. I will be with you to materialise the ideologies of my brother," he said in a statement.

"I can't help but tell you something about the current shaky situation of the BNP. Sometimes, I feel sorry as there are so many differences between the activities of the party and the ideologies Shaheed Ziaur Rahman had for the party."

Kamal claimed that a vested quarter with anti-liberation elements in it was trying to misguide the BNP leadership, including its Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"This quarter wants to keep the chairperson in the dark. On the other hand, the dedicated party leaders and activists, including the grassroots, are paying the price."

"We will have to stand beside them [the BNP men] to boost their confidence and guide them to the right direction."

He said, "I don't want to be in politics out of greed or for power. I want to stand beside the BNP and serve the country in this trying time."

At one point, he, without naming anyone, said it was inappropriate to create a controversy over the number of people martyred in the Liberation War.

Khaleda at a programme on December 21 last year had said, "There are controversies over exactly how many were martyred in the Liberation War. There are also many books and documents on the controversies."

Yesterday, Kamal said all the political parties should give up "the culture of dirty politics".

"We will have to keep Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman above any controversy."

Kamal is the only living brother among the five brothers of Zia. He retired as the general manager of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation in 2006.

Apart from him, former BNP whip Ashraf Hossain, former editor of Daily Dinkal Kazi Siraj, and former leader of Bikolpodhara Bangladesh Sheikh Shahidul Islam also spoke at the programme yesterday.

## 2015: tough year

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persecute minorities. It has been noticed that most of the land grabbers belong to the ruling party and the victims become helpless before their power and influence.

**Number of attacks**  
On religious institutions **31**

On households and business institutions **209**

Evicted **60** families

Idols desecrated **180**

Victims of extortion, beatings and torture in confinement **144** families

Police in many cases show reluctance to record complaints and even back influential people in grabbing land of the minorities.

Besides, criminals sexually harass and rape minority girls to create panic among the community. Attacking temples and desecrating idols have also become common.

Because of all this, minorities are compelled to leave their houses, land and even the country.

"What is most alarming is that the state is not paying much attention to the issue," said the report.

Things have worsened due to the culture of impunity. Specially, the hope for justice gets thinner when any ruling party man is involved in the crimes. If this situation continues, religious minorities will become extinct in Bangladesh, it added.

"We demand that Bangladesh will be a secular country where equal rights of all communities will be ensured," said Rana Das Gupta.

Around a dozen top leaders of the Parishad attended the press conference.